United Nations S/PRST/2000/16

Security Council

Distr.: General
11 May 2000
English
Original: English and Russian

Statement by the President of the Security Council

At the 4137th meeting of the Security Council, held on 11 May 2000 in connection with the Council's consideration of the item entitled "The situation in Georgia", the President of the Security Council made the following statement on behalf of the Council:

"The Security Council has considered the report of the Secretary-General concerning the situation in Abkhazia, Georgia, of 24 April 2000 (S/2000/345).

"The Security Council welcomes the efforts by the Special Representative of the Secretary-General to enhance contacts at all levels between the Georgian and Abkhaz sides, and calls upon the parties to continue to expand such contacts. It supports the Secretary-General's appeal to both sides to make more active use of the Coordinating Council machinery, and actively to consider the paper prepared by the Special Representative concerning the implementation of the agreed confidence-building measures. In this context, the Security Council recalls with appreciation the invitation of the Government of Ukraine to host a meeting in Yalta.

"The Security Council believes that resolution of issues related to the improvement of the humanitarian situation, socio-economic development and ensuring stability in the zone of conflict would facilitate the peace process. In this regard, it calls upon the parties to finalize their work on and to sign a draft agreement on peace and guarantees for the prevention of armed confrontation and a draft protocol on the return of refugees to the Gali region and measures for economic rehabilitation.

"The Security Council notes with deep concern the continued failure of the parties to achieve a comprehensive political settlement, which includes a settlement on the political status of Abkhazia within the State of Georgia. It also notes the adverse impact that this failure has on the humanitarian situation, economic development and stability in the region. It calls upon the parties to display the political will required for a breakthrough and to spare no efforts in order to achieve substantive progress without further delay. In this regard, it joins the Secretary-General in encouraging the parties to be ready to consider proposals, based on the Security Council decisions, to be presented in due course by the Special Representative on the question of the distribution of constitutional competences between Tbilisi and Sukhumi.

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"The Security Council strongly reaffirms the imprescriptible right of all refugees and internally displaced persons (IDPs) directly affected by the conflict to return to their homes in secure and dignified conditions. It calls upon the parties to agree upon and to take, in the nearest future, concrete steps towards implementing effective measures to guarantee the security of those who exercise their unconditional right to return, including those who have already returned. In particular, the undefined and insecure status of spontaneous returnees to the Gali district is a matter that must be addressed urgently. The Security Council encourages the Abkhaz side to continue the process of improvement of security conditions for returnees, which the Secretary-General notes may be beginning in the Gali region.

"The Security Council encourages the Special Representative, in this context, to continue his efforts, in close cooperation with the Russian Federation, in its capacity as facilitator, the Group of Friends of the Secretary-General and the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe.

"The Security Council expresses its appreciation for the measures undertaken by the Government of Georgia, the United Nations Development Programme, the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees and the Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs and the World Bank, in order to improve the situation of those refugees and IDPs who have not been in a position to exercise their right of return, to develop their skills and to increase their self-reliance.

"The Security Council notes that the situation on the ground in the United Nations Observer Mission in Georgia (UNOMIG) area of responsibility has remained generally calm although unstable during the reporting period. It welcomes all efforts which have been undertaken, in particular by the Special Representative, with a view to alleviating tensions and increasing confidence between the parties. It regrets that the Protocol of 3 February 2000 has not been implemented in full and, in particular, that the withdrawal of illegal armed groups has not been brought about. It is concerned at the tension created by recent attacks against Abkhaz militiamen. It deplores these attacks and the high level of criminal activities in the zone of conflict, as well as acts of violence against UNOMIG personnel and members of their families. In this context, the Council recalls the relevant principles contained in the Convention on the Safety of United Nations and Associated Personnel adopted on 9 December 1994 and the statement of its President of 10 February 2000 (S/PRST/2000/4). It calls on the parties to refrain from any actions which could increase tensions on the ground and to ensure the safety of the UNOMIG personnel.

"The Security Council welcomes the important contribution that the UNOMIG and the Collective Peacekeeping Forces of the Commonwealth of Independent States (CIS Peacekeeping Force) continue to make in stabilizing the situation in the zone of conflict, notes that the working relationship between UNOMIG and the CIS Peacekeeping Force has been good at all levels, and stresses the importance of continuing and increasing close cooperation and coordination between them in the performance of their respective mandates."